



**INCREASING FEDERAL GROSS VEHICLE WEIGHT (GVW)**  
**LEGISLATIVE GUIDANCE DOCUMENT**

**AGRICULTURAL TRANSPORTATION EFFICIENCY COALITION (AgTEC)**

**Purpose**

AgTEC advocates legislation to increase gross vehicle weight limits on federal highways, to advance transportation, environmental, safety, and international competitiveness issues facing the agricultural and forest products industries.

**Issue**

Currently, hauling unprocessed agricultural and forest products from farms and forests to processing facilities is a very inefficient and expensive element within those industries' supply chains.

The U. S. Interstate Highway System is the best road system in the world, but truck weights are restricted to 80,000 pounds on that system. This limitation puts U.S. producers and manufacturers at a significant disadvantage, because competitors in other countries are free to consolidate loads at much higher gross vehicle weights.

Many states have lifted truck weight limits on state roads in excess of 80,000 pounds, either by general policies (as in Maine and Wisconsin) or specific variances. These state policies enable efficiencies in transport, provide benefits to public safety, and reduce traffic congestion and total emissions. However, states are unable to coordinate these reforms with federal highways' gross vehicle weight rules. This situation creates significant hurdles to optimizing routes and thus prevents haulers from extending those benefits further, by bypassing towns and rural communities.

**Solution**

AgTEC recommends that Congress pass legislation to increase federal gross vehicle weight limits to allow semi trucks with five axles to haul up to 88,000 pounds and trucks with six axles to haul up to 97,000 pounds, with corresponding increases in single, tandem and tridem axle weights. AgTEC proposes the terms of this legislation be mandatory.

AgTEC supports a review of the current tax and fee structure to address any possible road and bridge wear associated with introducing these new gross vehicle weight and axle-weight allowances.

**Benefits**

AgTEC's proposal will conserve fuel, reduce total emissions (including carbon), increase productivity, enhance safety, reduce traffic congestion, and prevent further loss of more U.S. agricultural and forest industry jobs to other countries.

To present just one example, shipping the nation's unprocessed pulpwood on six-axle trucks loaded to 97,000 pounds (with corresponding axle weight increases) would produce the following benefits over current configurations, on an annual basis, nationwide:

- Reduction in diesel fuel used ..... 13.9 million fewer gallons
- Reduction in truckloads ..... 1.3 million fewer truckloads
- Reduction in total miles driven ..... 69.5 million fewer miles
- Reduction in CO2 emissions..... 242.3 million fewer pounds